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General Assembly
Fifty-third Session

Official Records

85th plenary meeting
Wednesday, 9 December 1998, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Opertti ..... (Uruguay)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Semakula Kiwanuka (Uganda), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.40 p.m.

Reports of the Third Committee

The Acting President: The General Assembly will now consider the reports of the Third Committee on agenda items 100 to 110 and 12.

I request the Rapporteur of the Third Committee, Mr. Hassan Kassem Najem of Lebanon, to introduce the reports of the Third Committee in one intervention.

Mr. Najem (Lebanon), Rapporteur of the Third Committee (*interpretation from Arabic*): I have the honour to present the reports of the Third Committee on the agenda items allocated to it by the General Assembly for consideration.

On agenda item 12, entitled "Report of the Economic and Social Council", the Third Committee recommends in paragraph 8 of document A/53/614 the adoption of two draft decisions.

On agenda item 100, entitled "Social development, including questions related to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family", the Third Committee recommends in paragraph 7 of document A/53/615 the adoption of a draft resolution.

On agenda item 101, entitled "Crime prevention and criminal justice", the Third Committee recommends in paragraph 18 of document A/53/616 the adoption of five draft resolutions.

On agenda item 102, entitled "International drug control". the Third Committee recommends in paragraph 7 of document A/53/617 the adoption of a draft resolution.

On agenda item 103, entitled "Advancement of women", the Third Committee recommends in paragraph 18 of document A/53/618 the adoption of four draft resolutions.

On agenda item 104, entitled "Implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women", the Third Committee recommends in paragraph 10 of document A/53/619 the adoption of a draft resolution.

On agenda item 105, entitled "Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees: questions relating to refugees, returnees and displaced persons and humanitarian questions", the Third Committee recommends in paragraph 22 of document A/53/620 the adoption of six draft resolutions.

On agenda item 106, entitled "Promotion and protection of the rights of children", the Third Committee recommends in paragraph 13 of document A/53/621 the adoption of two draft resolutions and in paragraph 14 the adoption of one draft decision.

98-86656 (E)

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one month of the date of the meeting*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

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I should like in this respect to draw the attention of the Assembly to two corrections to be made to the text of draft resolution II, entitled "The rights of the child". In section IV, the beginning of operative paragraph 15 should read:

> "*Underlines* the importance that relevant measures to ensure respect for the rights of the child".

The rest of the sentence should remain as it is.

Also in section IV, operative paragraph 17, the last sentence should read:

> "which will contribute towards making it possible to end impunity for the perpetrators of such crimes".

On agenda item 107, entitled "Programme of activities of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People", the Third Committee recommends in paragraph 10 of document A/53/622 the adoption of two draft resolutions and in paragraph 11 the adoption of one draft decision.

Under agenda item 108, entitled "Elimination of racism and racial discrimination", the Third Committee recommends, in document A/53/623, paragraph 17, the adoption of three draft resolutions.

I wish to draw the attention of the Assembly to paragraph 7 of the report contained in document A/53/624, which refers to the discussion in the Committee of draft resolution A/C.3/53/L.17, entitled "Use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination". In that paragraph, the appearance of Brunei Darussalam among the list of sponsors is a technical error. Brunei Darussalam should be deleted from the list of sponsors of the draft resolution.

Under agenda item 110, entitled "Human rights questions", the Third Committee recommends in document A/53/625, paragraph 4, the adoption of a draft decision.

Under agenda item 110 (a), entitled "Human rights questions: Implementation of human rights instruments", the Third Committee recommends in document A/53/625/Add.1, paragraph 21, the adoption of three draft resolutions.

Under agenda item 110 (b), entitled "Human rights questions: Human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms", the Third Committee recommends in document A/53/625/Add.2, paragraph 49, the adoption of 16 draft resolutions.

Under agenda item 110 (c), entitled "Human rights questions: Human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives", the Third Committee recommends in document A/53/625/Add.3, paragraph 55, the adoption of 10 draft resolutions. In this respect, I would like to draw the attention of the Assembly to paragraph 8 of the report, in which the following sentence should be inserted at the end of the paragraph:

> "At the same meeting, it was announced that the text, as orally revised, would be tabled as a Chairman's text."

Under agenda item 110 (d), entitled "Human rights questions: Comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action", the Third Committee recommends in document A/53/625/Add.4, paragraph 7, the adoption of one draft resolution.

Under agenda item 110 (e), entitled "Human rights questions: Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights", the Third Committee recommends in document A/53/625/Add.5, paragraph 10, the adoption of one draft resolution.

This year the Third Committee adopted 59 draft resolutions, only nine of which were adopted by recorded vote. This means there has been important progress towards finding understanding and improving coordination for the adoption by consensus of the majority of draft resolutions in the future.

The Acting President: If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, I shall take it that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the reports of the Third Committee that are before the Assembly today.

It was so decided.

The Acting President: Statements will therefore be limited to explanations of vote.

The positions of delegations regarding the recommendations of the Third Committee have been

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made clear in the Committee and are reflected in the relevant official records.

May I remind members that under paragraph 7 of decision 34/401, the General Assembly agreed that

> "When the same draft resolution is considered in a Main Committee and in plenary meeting, a delegation should, as far as possible, explain its vote only once, i.e., either in the Committee or in plenary meeting unless that delegation's vote in plenary meeting is different from its vote in the Committee."

May I remind delegations that, also in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Before we begin to take action on the recommendations contained in the reports of the Third Committee, I should like to advise representatives that we are going to proceed to take decisions in the same manner as was done in the Third Committee, unless the Secretariat is notified otherwise in advance.

This means that where the Committee took recorded votes and separate votes, we will do the same.

I should also hope that we may proceed to adopt without a vote those recommendations that were adopted without a vote in the Third Committee.

Agenda item 100

Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family

Report of the Third Committee (A/53/615)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Third Committee in paragraph 7 of its report.

The Third Committee adopted the draft resolution, entitled "International Year of Older Persons, 1999", without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 53/109).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 100?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 101

Crime prevention and criminal justice

Report of the Third Committee (A/53/616)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the five draft resolutions recommended by the Third Committee in paragraph 18 of its report.

We turn first to draft resolution I, entitled "Preparations for the Tenth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders".

The Third Committee adopted draft resolution I without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution I was adopted (resolution 53/110).

The Acting President: The Third Committee adopted draft resolution II, entitled "Transnational organized crime", without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution II was adopted (resolution 53/111).

The Acting President: Draft resolution III is entitled "Mutual assistance and international cooperation in criminal matters".

The Third Committee adopted draft resolution III without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution III was adopted (resolution 53/112).

The Acting President: The Third Committee adopted draft resolution IV, entitled "United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders", without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution IV was adopted (resolution 53/113).

The Acting President: Draft resolution V is entitled "Strengthening the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme, in particular its technical cooperation capacity".

The Third Committee adopted draft resolution V without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution V was adopted (resolution 53/114).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 101?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 102

International drug control

Report of the Third Committee (A/53/617)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Third Committee in paragraph 7 of its report.

The Third Committee adopted the draft resolution, entitled "International cooperation against the world drug problem", without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 53/115).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 102?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 103

Advancement of women

Report of the Third Committee (A/53/618)

The Acting President: The Assembly has before it four draft resolutions recommended by the Third Committee in paragraph 18 of its report.

We turn first to draft resolution I, entitled "Traffic in women and girls", which the Third Committee adopted without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution I was adopted (resolution 53/116).

The Acting President: The Third Committee adopted draft resolution II, entitled "Traditional or customary practices affecting the health of women and girls", without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution II was adopted (resolution 53/117).

The Acting President: The Third Committee adopted draft resolution III, entitled "Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women", without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution III was adopted (resolution 53/118).

The Acting President: The Third Committee adopted draft resolution IV, entitled "Improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat", without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution IV was adopted (resolution 53/119).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 103?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 104

Implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women

Report of the Third Committee (A/53/619)

Amendment (A/53/L.69)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Third Committee in paragraph 10 of its report. In this connection, the General Assembly also has before it an amendment thereto contained in document A/53/L.69.

In accordance with rule 90 of the rules of procedure, the amendment is voted on first. The Assembly will therefore take a decision first on the

amendment contained in document A/53/L.69. The additional sponsors of the amendment are Algeria, Bangladesh, Egypt, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Lesotho, Malaysia, Namibia, Nigeria, Pakistan, South Africa, the Sudan, Swaziland, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to adopt the amendment contained in document A/53/L.69?

The amendment was adopted.

The Acting President: The draft resolution, entitled "Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action", was adopted by the Third Committee without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt the draft resolution, as amended?

The draft resolution, as amended, was adopted (resolution 53/120).

The Acting President: I call on the representative of the Russian Federation, who wishes to speak in explanation of position on the resolution just adopted.

Mr. Zmeevski (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): The delegation of the Russian Federation is compelled to speak on document A/53/L.69, issued today, which contains an amendment to the draft resolution of the Third Committee contained in paragraph 10 of document A/53/619.

While we have no objection to the substantive change contained in the document, we believe that it is necessary to discuss and coordinate amendments in advance with all regional groups, particularly when we are considering the introduction of changes into a draft resolution that has already been endorsed by the Third Committee. We hope that the Bureau and the Secretariat will take the necessary steps so that in the future we may avoid similar situations, which do not promote consensus positions.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 104?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 105

Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees: questions relating to refugees, returnees and displaced persons and humanitarian questions

Report of the Third Committee (A/53/620)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the six draft resolutions recommended by the Third Committee in paragraph 22 of its report.

We turn first to draft resolution I, entitled "Enlargement of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees", which the Third Committee adopted without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution I was adopted (resolution 53/121).

The Acting President: The Third Committee adopted draft resolution II, entitled "Assistance to unaccompanied refugee minors", without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution II was adopted (resolution 53/122).

The Acting President: The Third Committee adopted draft resolution III, entitled "Follow-up to the Regional Conference to Address the Problems of Refugees, Displaced Persons, Other Forms of Involuntary Displacement and Returnees in the Countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States and Relevant Neighbouring States", without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution III was adopted (resolution 53/123).

The Acting President: The Third Committee adopted draft resolution IV, entitled "New international humanitarian order", without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution IV was adopted (resolution 53/124).

The Acting President: The Third Committee adopted draft resolution V, entitled "Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees", without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution V was adopted (resolution 53/125).

The Acting President: The Third Committee adopted draft resolution VI, entitled "Assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa", without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution VI was adopted (resolution 53/126).

The Acting President: I call on the representative of Armenia point of order.

Mr. Abelian (Armenia): I would like to make the following points in reference to the report contained in document A/53/620.

On page 2 of the document, the list of documents that were before the Third Committee for consideration refers, under sub-item (j), to a letter dated 17 November 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, contained in document A/C.3/53/16. That letter and its annex were published in violation of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly and of the provisions of relevant General Assembly resolutions, particularly those on the pattern of conferences.

I wish to draw to the attention of the General Assembly the fact that no undelivered statement can be published in the six official languages of the General Assembly. The secretariat of the Third Committee should at least have consulted the Bureau and elicited a decision of the General Assembly or the Third Committee. The provisions for publishing undelivered statements were only for the Special Political Committee and were discouraged by General Committee recommendation to the General Assembly.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 105?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 106

Promotion and protection of the rights of children

Report of the Third Committee (A/53/621)

The Acting President: The Assembly now has before it two draft resolutions recommended by the Third Committee in paragraph 13 of the report and one draft decision recommended by the Third Committee in paragraph 14 of the same report.

I call on the representative of the Russian Federation on a point of order.

Mr. Zmeevski (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): I would like to express the wish of our delegation to become a sponsor of draft resolution II, contained in document A/53/621.

The Acting President: I call on the representative of Argentina on a point of order.

Mr. Bocalandro (Argentina) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Argentine Republic cosponsored draft resolution A/C.3/53/L.15 in the Third Committee, but our name is not included in the list of sponsors of draft resolution I, now before the Assembly. I would be most grateful to have our country's name included.

The Acting President: I call on the representative of Cuba on a point of order.

Mr. Reyes Rodríguez (Cuba)(*interpretation from Spanish*): This same problem is going to involve all the Latin American countries. The Chairman of the regional group at that time signed the draft resolution on the rights of the child on behalf of all the countries of the Latin American Group. Yet Cuba and many other Latin American countries do not appear as sponsors of the draft resolution on the rights of the child. The names of all the members of the Latin American Group should be included among the sponsors.

The Acting President: I call on the representative of El Salvador on a point of order.

Mr. García González (El Salvador)(*interpretation from Spanish*): I wish to support the point made by the representative of Cuba.

The Acting President: I call on the representative of the Sudan on a point of order.

Mrs. Ahmed (Sudan)(*interpretation from Arabic*): I wish to request that the name of my country be added to the list of sponsors of draft resolution II, on the rights of the child.

The Acting President: The requests of delegations will be reflected in the record.

The Assembly has before it two draft resolutions recommended by the Third Committee in paragraph 13 of its report (A/53/621) and one draft decision recommended by the Third Committee in paragraph 14 of the same report.

We turn first to draft resolution I, which is entitled "The girl child".

The Third Committee adopted draft resolution I without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution I was adopted (resolution 53/127).

The Acting President: Draft resolution II is entitled "The rights of the child".

The Third Committee adopted draft resolution II without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt draft resolution II, as orally corrected by the Rapporteur?

Draft resolution II was adopted (resolution 53/128).

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision entitled "Report of the Secretary-General on the status of the Convention on the Rights of the Child".

May I consider that the Assembly wishes to adopt the draft decision recommended by the Third Committee?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 106?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 107

Programme of activities of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People

Report of the Third Committee (A/53/622)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the two draft resolutions recommended by the Third Committee in paragraph 10 of its report and the draft decision recommended by the Third Committee in paragraph 11 of the same report.

We turn first to draft resolution I, entitled "International Decade of the World's Indigenous People".

The Third Committee adopted draft resolution I without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution I was adopted (resolution 53/129).

The Acting President: The Third Committee adopted draft resolution II, entitled "United Nations Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations", without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution II was adopted (resolution 53/130).

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision, entitled "Report of the Secretary-General on the status of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations".

May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to adopt the draft decision recommended by the Third Committee?

The draft decision was adopted.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 107?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 108

Elimination of racism and racial discrimination

Report of the Third Committee (A/53/623)

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/53/727)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the three draft resolutions recommended by the Third Committee in paragraph 17 of its report.

The report of the Fifth Committee on the programme budget implications of draft resolution I is contained in document A/53/727.

We turn first to draft resolution I, entitled "International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination", which the Third Committee adopted without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution I was adopted (resolution 53/131).

The Acting President: Draft resolution II is entitled "Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination and the convening of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance".

The Third Committee adopted draft resolution II without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution II was adopted (resolution 53/132).

The Acting President: Draft resolution III is entitled "Measures to combat contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance".

The Third Committee adopted draft resolution III without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution III was adopted (resolution 53/133).

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 108.

Agenda item 109

Right of peoples to self-determination

Report of the Third Committee (A/53/624)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the three draft resolutions recommended by the Third Committee in paragraph 14 of its report.

We turn first to Draft resolution I, entitled "Universal realization of the right of peoples to self-determination".

The Third Committee adopted draft resolution I without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution I was adopted (resolution 53/134).

The Acting President: Draft resolution II is entitled "Use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination".

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Antigua and Barbuda, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Albania, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Micronesia (Federated States of), Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, United Kingdom of

Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Abstaining:

Andorra, Argentina, Australia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Estonia, France, Greece, Ireland, Israel, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Marshall Islands, Monaco, New Zealand, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Samoa, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Spain, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu

Draft resolution II was adopted by 115 votes to 18, with 35 abstentions (resolution 53/135).

[Subsequently, the delegations of Angola and Bangladesh informed the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour; the delegation of Malta had intended to abstain.]

The Acting President: Draft resolution III is entitled "The right of the Palestinian people to self-determination".

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Germany, Ghana, Grecce, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Israel, United States of America

Abstaining:

Fiji, Georgia, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Uruguay, Uzbekistan

Draft resolution III was adopted by 162 votes to 2, with 6 abstentions (resolution 53/136).

[Subsequently, the delegation of Angola informed the Secretariat that it had intended to vote in favour.]

The Acting President: I now call on the representative of Australia, who wishes to make a statement in explanation of vote after the voting.

Ms. Kerr (Australia): Australia is deeply concerned about the activities of mercenaries and at the potential for instability brought about by their use. Australia has already taken steps to legislate against mercenaries in its Crimes, Foreign Incursions and Recruitment Act, which prohibits the training, financing and use of mercenaries in Australia.

Given the nature of the problem of mercenaries, Australia also considers that international cooperation is required to address this significant global issue. The Australian Government is therefore taking steps to accede to the International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries, and urges other countries to do likewise. When it enters into force, the Convention will provide an effective legal regime to

enhance international cooperation for the prevention of recruitment and use of mercenaries.

Australia therefore supports strongly the call, in operative paragraph 4 of resolution 53/135, on all States that have not yet done so to consider taking the necessary action to become parties to the Convention.

However, Australia is unable to support the resolution as a whole, because of the language used in other operative paragraphs, which divert the focus of the resolution from the use of mercenaries to extraneous issues.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 109?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 110

Human rights questions

Report of the Third Committee (A/53/625)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision recommended by the Third Committee in paragraph 4 of its report.

The draft decision is entitled "Documents considered by the General Assembly in connection with the question of human rights".

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt the draft decision recommended by the Third Committee?

The draft decision was adopted.

(a) Implementation of human rights instruments

Report of the Third Committee (A/53/625/Add.1)

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/53/728)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now proceed to take a decision on the three draft resolutions recommended by the Third Committee in paragraph 21 of its report.

The report of the Fifth Committee on the programme budget implications of draft resolution III is contained in document A/53/728.

I call on the representative of the Sudan, who wishes to speak in explanation of vote before the voting.

Mrs. Ahmed (Sudan) (*interpretation from Arabic*): My delegation wishes to explain its vote on paragraph 26 of draft resolution II, contained in document A/53/625/Add.1. My delegation believes that the human rights treaty bodies have specific legal obligations and a direct relationship with the parties to them, while the Commission on Human Rights and its bodies are political or diplomatic in character, having their own functions in this respect. Therefore, in order to maintain the special character of these bodies and to prevent any confusion about their functions and characters, my delegation will vote against paragraph 26.

The Acting President: We shall now take action on draft resolution I, entitled "International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families".

The Third Committee adopted draft resolution I without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution I was adopted (resolution 53/137).

The Acting President: Draft resolution II is entitled "Effective implementation of international instruments on human rights, including reporting obligations under international instruments on human rights".

A separate vote has been requested on operative paragraph 26 of draft resolution II.

I see no objection to that request.

I shall therefore first put to the vote operative paragraph 26.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Finland, France,

Gambia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lesotho, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Samoa, San Marino, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Gabon, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Sudan

Abstaining:

Algeria, Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belize, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, China, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Georgia, Grenada, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Indonesia, Jamaica, Jordan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Malaysia, Mali, Mauritania, Myanmar, Niger, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Saint Lucia, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Viet Nam, Yemen

Operative paragraph 26 was retained by 104 votes to 7, with 44 abstentions.

[Subsequently, the delegation of Gabon informed the Secretariat that it had intended to abstain.]

The Acting President: The Third Committee adopted draft resolution II, as a whole, without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution II, as a whole, was adopted (resolution 53/138).

The Acting President: We shall now turn to draft resolution III, entitled "Torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment".

The Third Committee adopted draft resolution III without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution III was adopted (resolution 53/139).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 110?

It was so decided.

(b) Human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms

Report of the Third Committee (A/53/625/Add.2)

Amendment (A/53/L.70)

The Acting President: The Assembly has before it 16 draft resolutions recommended by the Third Committee in paragraph 49 of its report and an amendment to draft resolution XV, contained in document A/53/L.70.

I now call on the representative of South Africa to introduce the amendment contained in document A/53/L.70.

Mr. Mofokeng (South Africa): In addition to introducing the amendment, I should like to orally revise the written amendment in accordance with agreement reached in informal consultations.

I invite the attention of the Assembly to the new paragraph 1 as it appears in document A/53/L.70. The oral revision is to delete all the words from "Recalls" in the first line to "and" in the second line, so that the new paragraph 1 would read:

"*Welcomes* the decision of the Commission to continue the consideration of this question at its fifty-fifth session".

The Acting President: I call on the representative of Egypt, who wishes to speak in explanation of position before action is taken.

Ms. Mekhemar (Egypt): With regard to draft resolution V, entitled "Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms", under agenda item 110 (b), we would like to draw the attention of the Assembly to the joint declaration contained in document A/53/679, which reflects the position of the countries listed in paragraph 16 of document A/53/625/Add.2 on the draft resolution and the Declaration annexed to it.

The Acting President: I shall put the 16 draft resolutions and the amendment, which has been orally revised, to the Assembly one by one. After all the decisions have been taken, representatives will again have the opportunity to explain their vote.

We turn first to draft resolution I, entitled "Elimination of all forms of religious intolerance".

The Third Committee adopted draft resolution I without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution I was adopted (resolution 53/140).

The Acting President: We turn now to draft resolution II, entitled "Human rights and unilateral coercive measures".

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gambia, Georgia, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Albania, Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Gabon, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Abstaining:

Armenia, Cyprus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Malta, Marshall Islands, Nicaragua, Tajikistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan

Draft resolution II was adopted by 110 votes to 45, with 10 abstentions (resolution 53/141).

[Subsequently, the delegation of Gabon informed the Secretariat that it had intended to abstain.]

The Acting President: We turn now to draft resolution III, entitled "Strengthening of the rule of law".

The Third Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution III was adopted (resolution 53/142).

The Acting President: Draft resolution IV is entitled "Respect for the right to universal freedom of travel and the vital importance of family reunification".

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Morocco, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Angola, United States of America

Abstaining:

Albania, Andorra, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Mozambique, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Samoa, San Marino, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Trinidad and Tobago, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uzbekistan

Draft resolution IV was adopted by 103 votes to 2, with 66 abstentions (resolution 53/143).

[Subsequently, the delegation of Angola informed the Secretariat that it had intended to vote in favour.]

The Acting President: We turn now to draft resolution V, entitled, "Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms".

Draft resolution V was adopted by the Third Committee without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly too wishes to adopt the draft resolution?

Draft resolution V was adopted (resolution 53/144).

The Acting President: Draft resolution VI is entitled "Situation of human rights in Cambodia".

The Third Committee adopted draft resolution VI without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution VI was adopted (resolution 53/145).

The Acting President: Draft resolution VII is entitled "Human rights and extreme poverty".

The Third Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution VII was adopted (resolution 53/146).

The Acting President: We now turn to draft resolution VIII, entitled "Extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions".

The Third Committee adopted draft resolution VIII without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution VIII was adopted (resolution 53/147).

The Acting President: Draft resolution IX is entitled "Regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights".

The Third Committee adopted draft resolution IX without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution IX was adopted (resolution 53/148).

The Acting President: Draft resolution X is entitled "Strengthening of United Nations actions in the human rights field through the promotion of international cooperation and the importance of non-selectivity, impartiality and objectivity".

The Third Committee adopted draft resolution X without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution X was adopted (resolution 53/149).

The Acting President: Draft resolution XI is entitled "Question of enforced or involuntary disappearances".

Draft resolution XI was adopted by the Third Committee without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes also to adopt the draft resolution?

Draft resolution XI was adopted (resolution 53/150).

The Acting President: Draft resolution XII is entitled "Follow-up to the United Nations Year for Tolerance".

The Third Committee adopted draft resolution XII without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution XII was adopted (resolution 53/151).

The Acting President: Draft resolution XIII is entitled "The human genome and human rights".

Draft resolution XIII was adopted by the Third Committee without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt the draft resolution?

Draft resolution XIII was adopted (resolution 53/152).

The Acting President: Draft resolution XIV is entitled "United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education, 1995-2004, and public information activities in the field of human rights".

The Third Committee adopted draft resolution XIV without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution XIV was adopted (resolution 53/153).

The Acting President: The Assembly will now turn to draft resolution XV, entitled "Enhancement of international cooperation in the field of human rights", and to the amendment to that draft resolution contained in document A/53/L.70, as orally revised.

Under rule 90 of the rules of procedure, the amendment is voted on first. The Assembly will therefore take a decision first on the amendment contained in document A/53/L.70, as orally revised.

May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to adopt the amendment to draft resolution XV contained in document A/53/L.70, as orally revised?

The amendment, as orally revised, was adopted.

The Acting President: Draft resolution XV was adopted by the Third Committee without a vote.

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt draft resolution XV, as amended?

Draft resolution XV, as amended, was adopted (resolution 53/154).

The Acting President: Draft resolution XVI is entitled "Right to development".

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon,

Gambia, Georgia, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

United States of America

Abstaining:

Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Draft resolution XVI was adopted by 125 votes to 1, with 42 abstentions (resolution 53/155).

[Subsequently, the delegations of Azerbaijan and Bahrain informed the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour, and the delegation of the Czech Republic had intended to abstain.]

The Acting President: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in explanation of vote or position on the resolutions just adopted.

Ms. King (United States of America): In the Third Committee, the United States delegation voted against draft resolution XVI, on the right to development, and did so again here in plenary meeting. We had hoped until the final stages of consultations before the Committee took action that we would be able to negotiate compromises that would have allowed us to join consensus. We believe that the effort failed because the draft resolution was not circulated in time for all of the contentious issues to be worked out. As members know, this draft resolution was the last to be addressed by the Third Committee, and the session was extended several times because of it.

While there is much in the resolution that we support, the United States voted against it because of profound disagreement on the following points. We do not agree that international macroeconomic policy-making, globalization and debt relief are proper subjects for consideration in the various United Nations human rights forums. Other United Nations forums exist with responsibility for these issues.

We believe it is wrong, and dangerously misleading, to pin the blame for long-standing problems of food, health, education and unemployment on the current international financial difficulties. These problems existed long before the global financial crisis and will continue long after the crisis has passed, unless we confront them squarely, understand their fundamental roots and deal with them through the fundamental structural measures that we all know are required.

We do not support a convention on the right to development. There are many United Nations agencies devoted to development activities, and we believe that promotion of development appropriately belongs with them. By the same token, we do not support adding to the mandate of the High Commissioner for Human Rights burdensome new mandates in the field of development, which are already being pursued by the appropriate United Nations development agencies. Apart from being wasteful and duplicative, this will divert scarce resources from human rights activities for which the High Commissioner has an exclusive mandate.

We also regret that the resolution fails to note an essential point agreed upon at the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights: that the lack of development cannot be invoked to justify an abridgement of internationally recognized human rights.

Five years after the first consensus statement in Vienna on this subject, and after a consensus resolution at the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, we

believed developing and developed countries alike would be able to proceed another step towards a more complete understanding of what the right to development means and how to work together towards its realization. We are disappointed that consensus was broken. We hope that all delegations will take time to reflect on how we can retain the spirit of cooperation that prevails on development issues when we return to the Commission on Human Rights next March in Geneva.

Mr. Felten (Germany): With regard to resolution 53/152, entitled "The human genome and human rights", I would like to draw the attention of the Assembly to the explanation of vote that the German delegation made on the occasion of the adoption of this draft resolution in the Third Committee.

For the reasons set out in that explanation, Germany is not yet in a position to decide upon the implementation of the Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 110?

It was so decided.

(c) Human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives

Report of the Third Committee (A/53/625/Add.3)

The Acting President: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to explain their votes or positions before the voting on the 10 draft resolutions contained in document A/53/625/Add.3.

Mr. Al-Ethary (Yemen) (*interpretation from Arabic*): My delegation wishes to explain its vote on the draft resolutions before the Assembly.

The democratic process that began in my country after unification in 1990 has consecrated human rights in Yemen, constitutionally, legally and in practice. This process has also been conducive to a widespread climate of political freedom and freedom of the press — there are more than 100 newspapers and party bulletins and over 17 political parties and organizations in the country. This democratic process has been promoted by parliamentary elections that were declared fair and free by hundreds of international observers.

Yemen therefore wishes to stress its commitment to human rights conventions and instruments. At the same time, it denounces all violations of human rights whenever and wherever they occur. However, the Arab Republic of Yemen has noticed that the issue of human rights has been treated in a politicized and selective way. This has compelled my delegation to abstain in the voting on all draft resolutions on human rights, with the exception of those adopted by consensus. Accordingly, we abstained in the voting in the Third Committee on the draft resolutions contained in document A/53/625/Add.3 for the following reasons.

First, we abstained in the voting because of the politicization of human rights issues and their use as political tools to pursue economic, commercial and other interests.

Secondly, we abstained because of the use of human rights issues as a pretext to interfere in the internal affairs of States in order to impose hegemony or a state of political dependency on other countries.

We abstained, thirdly, because of double standards and criteria, fourthly, because of the selective approach in investigating shortcomings with regards to human rights and, fifthly, because of the disregard for the right of development and the underemphasis on its direct impact on human rights.

Mr. Kamal (Pakistan): My delegation wishes to explain its position on draft resolution X, contained in document A/53/625/Add.3, entitled "Situation of human rights in Afghanistan".

We fully understand that the human rights situation in various parts of Afghanistan is a cause of international concern. We are confident that this situation will improve once peace returns to that war-ravaged country, and we urge reconciliation within Afghanistan through realistic compromise and mutual accommodation. We also call for international engagement and dialogue with Afghanistan to promote the objectives of humanitarianism, human rights and peace.

Pakistan fully supports the efforts of the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference for the restoration of durable peace in Afghanistan. We

believe, however, that the cessation of all outside interference inside Afghanistan is a prerequisite for the realization of this objective. In order to strengthen its role as an impartial mediator in Afghanistan, the United Nations needs to adopt the vacant-seat formula for the representation of Afghanistan, as has been implemented by the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

Pakistan strongly condemned the killing of the Iranian personnel seized in Mazar-e-Sharif. Those responsible for these outrageous killings must be punished. We are encouraged that during the recent visit of the Secretary-General's Special Envoy, the authorities in Kabul agreed to the establishment of commissions of inquiry to investigate the killing of Iranian personnel in Mazar-e-Sharif — a crime from which they have already dissociated themselves — as well as other killings.

The United Nations needs urgently to initiate the process for establishing these commissions. Besides the visit of the commissions of inquiry, the return of United Nations workers to Afghanistan and the stationing of United Nations monitors in major cities of Afghanistan would help in preventing the recurrence of such unfortunate incidents in the future.

In the Third Committee my delegation expressed its dissatisfaction with the interim report of the Special Rapporteur on Afghanistan. Paragraph 3 of that interim report clearly states that the Special Rapporteur was "unable to travel to Afghanistan and Pakistan" (*A/53/539, para.3)* due to security considerations. We are unable to understand the reference to Pakistan. I myself, at least, am not aware of any security situation in Pakistan that could have prevented the Special Rapporteur from undertaking a visit to Islamabad.

What is clear, however, is that the Special Rapporteur did not visit Afghanistan. It is obvious, then, that the interim report was written somewhere else. It therefore contains merely allegations and counter-allegations, based on hearsay and bereft of any on-the-spot investigation whatsoever. Despite this serious flaw, the Special Rapporteur has regrettably deemed it appropriate to draw conclusions and to express shock and dismay at the situation in the country. How has he arrived at these conclusions, and on the basis of what evidence and what investigations?

My delegation cannot associate itself with an unsubstantiated report from a Special Rapporteur who failed even to appear before the Committee to explain how he had arrived at his conclusions without any investigation.

For these reasons, my delegation disassociated itself from the consideration of the draft resolution on "The question of human rights in Afghanistan" in the Third Committee on 20 November 1998. My delegation wishes to reiterate the same position in the plenary as well.

I would request that this statement be included in the official proceedings of the General Assembly.

Mr. Nesho (Albania): I should like to speak in explanation of vote before the voting on draft resolution IX, entitled "Situation of human rights in Kosovo".

Albania has for a number of years been the main author of the resolution entitled "Situation of human rights in Kosovo". Since 1992, the General Assembly has addressed the situation of human rights in Kosovo with particular concern through its resolutions 47/147, 48/153, 49/204, 50/190, 51/111 and 52/139.

Unfortunately, despite this continuous attention, a second Bosnia tragedy is in the making in Kosovo, which the international community has not been able to prevent. The year 1998 has become the year of the "ethnic cleansing" of the Kosovo Albanians, and the situation there has taken on the dimensions of a real threat to international peace and security, as already defined in Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998) and 1203 (1998).

Since the beginning of this year, the Serbian military and police forces have been carrying out military attacks against the Albanian population in Kosovo. The consequences of this policy have been appalling. First, wanton and summary executions have caused the death of thousands of innocent people, who were massacred, mutilated and beheaded. Among them were pregnant women, children, and elderly and sick people.

Secondly, the intentional shelling and burning of Albanian villages has destroyed one-third of the houses and forced more than 300,000 people to flee. Thirdly, a catastrophic humanitarian situation has developed, with people living in the open, without food, shelter or medical assistance.

The Albanian delegation would like from the outset to thank the United States of America for taking the lead this year and for its great efforts to reach a broad

agreement on this issue. My delegation was actively involved in the whole process of negotiations and was prepared and willing to become a co-sponsor of this draft resolution, given the fact that Albania has been its main author for years, the relevance of this issue, and the situation of 2 million Albanians in Kosovo.

Unfortunately, Albania was not able to co-sponsor the draft resolution this year. Despite our great and constructive efforts, the sponsors of this draft could not accommodate our principled position on a number of issues.

First, the draft resolution took out the reference to the respect of the will of the inhabitants of Kosovo — operative paragraph 16 — which has been the core element of the previous resolutions on the human rights situation in Kosovo adopted by the General Assembly. The Albanian delegation is of the opinion that no sustainable solution to the conflict in Kosovo can be found without respecting the will of the Kosovar Albanians.

Secondly, the draft resolution fails to take into consideration the fact that the Kosovar Albanians have for nine years organized a peaceful resistance to the Serbian oppression and State terror. For nine years, the Albanians did not commit a single act of violence despite persecution, torture, deprivation, illegal detention and the negation of all human rights by the Belgrade regime.

In the face of this year's Serbian military and police attack, which threatened their basic right to life, the Kosovar Albanians were obliged to resist through self-defence. The sixth preambular paragraph and operative paragraphs 6 and 9 do not reflect the reality on the ground. If the sixth preambular paragraph and operative paragraphs 6, 9 and 16 were to be put to the vote separately, the Albanian delegation would vote against them.

Given the importance of the issue and the fact that this is the only draft resolution of the General Assembly which addresses the situation of human rights in Kosovo, the Albanian delegation will vote in its favour.

We would kindly ask the Secretariat that this statement be placed on record.

The Acting President: The statement by the representative of Albania will be reflected in the record.

The Assembly has before it 10 draft resolutions recommended by the Third Committee in paragraph 55 of its report. I shall put the 10 draft resolutions to the General Assembly one by one. After all decisions have been taken, representatives will again have the opportunity to explain their votes.

The Assembly will first turn to draft resolution I, entitled "Situation of human rights in Rwanda".

The Third Committee adopted draft resolution I without a vote. May I take it the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution I was adopted (resolution 53/156).

The Acting President: Draft resolution II is entitled "Situation of human rights in Iraq".

A separate vote has been requested on operative paragraphs 4, 13, 15 and 17 of draft resolution II.

Are there any objections to that request?

There are none.

I shall now put to the vote operative paragraphs 4, 13, 15 and 17, on which a separate vote has been requested.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Albania, Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Barbados, Belgium, Belize, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lesotho, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Mozambique, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Spain, Swaziland,

Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Zambia

Against:

Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Sudan

Abstaining:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Bangladesh, Belarus, Benin, Brunei Darussalam, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, China, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Fiji, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, India, Indonesia, Jordan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Malaysia, Mali, Mauritania, Mexico, Morocco, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam

Operative paragraphs 4, 13, 15 and 17 of draft resolution II were retained by 93 votes to 2, with 57 abstentions.

The Acting President: I now put to the vote draft resolution II as a whole.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Albania, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Comoros, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lesotho, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Swaziland, Sweden, Tajikistan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Zambia

Against:

Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Nigeria, Sudan

Abstaining:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Benin, Brunei Darussalam, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, China, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Fiji, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, India, Indonesia, Jordan, Kenya, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Malaysia, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Niger, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Saint Lucia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Viet Nam, Zimbabwe

Draft resolution II, as a whole, was adopted by 103 votes to 3, with 56 abstentions (resolution 53/157).

The Acting President: We turn now to draft resolution III, entitled "Situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran".

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Andorra, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Barbados, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia,

Lesotho, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Samoa, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Spain, Sweden, Trinidad and Tobago, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Zambia

Against:

Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Benin, Brunei Darussalam, China, Comoros, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kuwait, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Maldives, Morocco, Myanmar, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Viet Nam, Zimbabwe,

Abstaining:

Albania, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Bhutan, Botswana, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Cyprus, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mali, Mauritania, Mexico, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Senegal, Singapore, South Africa, Suriname, Swaziland, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela

Draft resolution III was adopted by 64 votes to 41, with 56 abstentions (resolution 53/158).

The Acting President: Draft resolution IV is entitled "Situation of human rights in Haiti".

The Third Committee adopted draft resolution IV without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution IV was adopted (resolution 53/159).

The Acting President: Draft resolution V is entitled "Situation of human rights in the Democratic Republic of the Congo".

I call on the representative of Austria on a point or order.

Mr. Theuermann (Austria): I have just been informed that in the French version of the draft resolution operative paragraph 8 is not properly translated. In the English version it says "*Encourages* the Government", and so forth. This is not the case in the French version.

We very much hope that this can be corrected. This is of importance. I hope that this change can be reflected in the text that is to be adopted without a vote.

The Acting President: The observations of the representative of Austria will be recorded and reflected.

The Third Committee adopted draft resolution V without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution V was adopted (resolution 53/160).

The Acting President: We turn now to draft resolution VI, entitled "Situation of human rights in Nigeria".

The Third Committee adopted draft resolution VI without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution VI was adopted (resolution 53/161).

The Acting President: We now turn to draft resolution VII, entitled "Situation of human rights in Myanmar".

The Third Committee adopted draft resolution VII without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution VII was adopted (resolution 53/162).

The Acting President: Draft resolution VIII is entitled "Situation of human rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro)".

I have been informed by the Secretariat that no separate vote has been requested on this draft resolution.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution VIII.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Canada, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Estonia, Finland, France, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela

Against:

None

Abstaining:

Belarus, Cameroon, China, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, India, Kenya, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mali, Namibia, Russian Federation, United Republic of Tanzania, Zimbabwe

Draft resolution VIII was adopted by 141 votes to none, with 21 abstentions (resolution 53/163).

[Subsequently, the delegation of Angola informed the Secretariat that it had intended to abstain.]

The Acting President: Draft resolution IX is entitled "Situation of human rights in Kosovo".

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Benin, Bolivia, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Canada, Cape Verde, Chad, Chile, Comoros, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gambia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Tajikistan, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu

Against:

Belarus, India, Russian Federation

Abstaining:

Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Bhutan, Botswana, Cameroon, Central African Republic, China, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Jamaica, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Peru, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Trinidad and Tobago, Ukraine, United Republic of Tanzania, Venezuela, Zimbabwe

Draft resolution IX was adopted by 122 votes to 3, with 34 abstentions (resolution 53/164).

The Acting President: Draft resolution X is entitled "Situation of human rights in Afghanistan".

The Third Committee adopted draft resolution X without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution X was adopted (resolution 53/165).

The Acting President: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in explanation of vote or position on the resolutions just adopted.

Mr. Yacoubou (Benin) (*interpretation from French*): Following the adoption, with a vote, of resolution 53/158, on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, the delegation of Benin wishes to stress the following points.

The Republic of Benin remains committed to the question of democracy and human rights, and we have made it one of the bases of our foreign policy. In fact, since the conference of the nation's active forces in February of 1990, Benin has constantly taken steps to promote a democratic culture and respect for human rights. In this endeavour, we enjoy considerable support from the international community in general and from our development partners in particular. It is in this context that we will be hosting the Fourth International Conference of New or Restored Democracies in the year 2000 in Cotonou.

According to the resolution on the human rights situation in the Islamic Republic of Iran, there is a real political will to establish a more tolerant and more peaceful society in that country. The Iranian Government has undertaken to promote respect for the rule of law, to eliminate arbitrary arrests and detentions and to strengthen the legal and prison systems. All these points are welcomed in the resolution.

Benin's modest experience in this field has shown that the promotion of human rights and democracy is a long-term endeavour that needs to be carried out on the ground and over time. This is why Benin believes that Iran should be supported and encouraged to continue the efforts being made to establish a state of law. It is for this reason that we voted against the resolution.

Mr. Xie Bohua (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): I wish to explain our vote on resolution 53/164, entitled "Situation of human rights in Kosovo".

On the basis of the principle of sovereignty and territorial integrity and non-interference in the internal affairs of other States, an important principle of the United Nations Charter, the Chinese delegation is not in favour of considering questions of a certain region in a territory of a country under the agenda item on the human rights situation of individual countries. We believe that Kosovo is a part of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and respect for the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia's sovereignty and territorial integrity and non-interference in its internal affairs under any pretext are in conformity with the principles of the United Nations Charter. For this reason, the Chinese delegation could not support the resolution entitled "Situation of human rights in Kosovo", which was just adopted. Therefore, we abstained in the voting.

Mr. Mukhopadhaya (India): My delegation wishes to explain its vote on resolution 53/164, on the situation of human rights in Kosovo.

India voted against the resolution on the situation of human rights in Kosovo, but not because India is indifferent to the plight of the Albanian minority in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. On the contrary, as a democracy and country of many languages and faiths, committed to pluralism, India is firmly committed to human rights and to the promotion and protection of the rights of all minorities within the framework of the unity and territorial integrity of Member States.

Rather, we voted against the resolution because it reflects the inconsistent manner in which human rights

violations in the former Yugoslavia have been treated in the Third Committee.

On the one hand, we have one resolution — resolution 53/163 — on the situation of human rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) — that is, on three independent, sovereign countries, in one resolution. On the other hand, we have another resolution, piloted in the Third Committee by the same delegation, on a part of one of those three countries as though that part of the country were not an integral part of the country concerned.

India is also committed to the preservation and protection of the territorial integrity, national sovereignty and independence of Member States of the United Nations. Indeed, Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998) and 1199 (1998) also reaffirm the commitment of all United Nations Member States to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Given the existence of another resolution on the same country, the resolution on the situation of human rights in Kosovo seems to convey the presumably unintended signal that we are referring to the situation of human rights in a separate territory. It could therefore be seen as inconsistent with Article 2, paragraph 7, of the United Nations Charter.

The right place to have addressed the situation of human rights in Kosovo would appear to have been in the context of either the omnibus resolution or a separate resolution on the situation of human rights in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

For the reasons outlined, we were obliged to vote against the resolution.

Mr. Mangoaela (Lesotho): My delegation voted in favour of resolution 53/158, on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran. We did so because we believe that the resolution highlights the positive developments and general progress on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Among other things, the resolution welcomes the open debate in the Islamic Republic of Iran on issues of governance and human rights. It also welcomes the commitment made by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to promote respect for the rule of law. Furthermore, it welcomes a more positive approach by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran as regards freedom of assembly.

My delegation appreciates this positive development and encourages further efforts by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to improve the situation of human rights in that country.

Mr. Ravou-Akii (Vanuatu) (*interpretation from French*): I have taken the floor to explain my delegation's vote on resolution 53/158 on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Last year, in the course of the work of the fifty-second session, my delegation voted in favour of the resolution on this topic. This year, we abstained in the voting. The principal reason for our abstention is the fact that the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran launched an appeal here in the General Assembly early in the work of its fifty-third session. We believe that his appeal represents a significant opening that the international community must support.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote.

I call on the representative of Afghanistan, who wishes to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

I remind him that statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second intervention and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Farhadi (Afghanistan) (*interpretation from French*): I am speaking in reply to the statement made by the Ambassador of Pakistan on the resolution on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan.

I was truly saddened to hear such an eminent personality as Professor Paik, a dean of the College of Law of Seoul National University in Korea, referred to almost as though he were a dishonest man by the representative of Pakistan, who threw Professor Paik's report into question. People like Mr. Paik are faithful servants of human society and human rights. He visited Afghanistan several times, including in May 1998, and his statements are thus very well founded. For three years, we have repeatedly endorsed his statements on Afghanistan.

The representative of Pakistan tells us that Mr. Paik has not been to Afghanistan in recent months. Obviously, he was unable to enter the country because he was denied

permission to do so and clearly could not run the risk of suffering the fate of Lieutenant-Colonel Calo, who was murdered on 21 August by two Pakistanis in Afghanistan.

The Ambassador of Pakistan yet again trotted out the three-year-old litany about a vacant seat for Afghanistan. Of course, he cited the instance of the Organization of the Islamic Conference. The Assembly should be aware, however, that ever since the Conference adopted a resolution on the Afghanistan seat, the Taliban side has systematically denied every demand of the Conference.

The representative of Pakistan obviously intends that there should be no Afghani voice in this Assembly, because we denounce Pakistani intervention, particularly military intervention, in Afghanistan's affairs and the presence of 35,000 armed Pakistanis in Afghanistan. That paints the picture clearly. What is also crystal clear is that no country here, no State represented in this great Hall, supports the points made by the representative of Pakistan.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (c) of agenda item 110?

It was so decided.

(d) Comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action

Report of the Third Committee (A/53/625/Add.4)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Third Committee in paragraph 7 of its report (A/53/625/Add.4).

The Third Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 53/166).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (d) of agenda item 110?

It was so decided.

(e) Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Report of the Third Committee (A/53/625/Add.5)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Third Committee in paragraph 10 of its report (A/53/625/Add.5).

The Third Committee adopted the draft resolution, entitled "Question of resources for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the human rights activities of the United Nations", without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 53/167).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (e) of agenda item 110?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 110 as a whole?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 12 (*continued*)

Report of the Economic and Social Council

Report of the Third Committee (A/53/614)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the two draft decisions recommended by the Third Committee in paragraph 8 of its report (A/53/614).

We turn first to draft decision I, entitled "Organization of work of the Third Committee and biennial programme of work of the Committee for 1999-2000".

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt draft decision I, as recommended by the Third Committee?

Draft decision I was adopted.

The Acting President: We turn next to draft decision II, entitled "Report of the Economic and Social Council".

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt draft decision II, as recommended by the Third Committee?

Draft decision II was adopted.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of the chapters of the report of the Economic and Social Council allocated to the Third Committee?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of all the reports of the Third Committee before it.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.